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Research Article

**SATISFACTION OF PATIENTS ATTENDING OPD OF  
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR TERTIARY CARE  
HOSPITALS OF FAISALABAD****Aneeqa Ahmad, Amna Mahmood, Aleena Aslam**  
Allied Hospital Faisalabad**Article Received:** March 2020**Accepted:** April 2020**Published:** May 2020**Abstract:**

*Patient satisfaction is one of the paramount intents of any health system, but it is difficult to measure the satisfaction and gauge responsiveness of health systems as not only the clinical but also the nonclinical outcomes of care do influence the customer satisfaction. This study is attempted to appraise the level of patient satisfaction in private and public sector hospitals. It is a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in out-patient department of Allied and Aziz Fatima Memorial Hospital from May to August using convenient sampling and closed ended structured questionnaire to collect the quantitative data. The study was conducted on 100 patients in limited time and resources. Overall satisfaction level of patients with OPD services of public sector was 71% and with private sector hospital was 83%. The satisfaction level was higher among the people with income less than 30,000. The patients were satisfied with the behavior of doctors and paramedical staff in both sectors. They were dissatisfied with the high prices for available facilities in private sector hospital and delayed availability with excessive waiting time in public sector hospital. Management of hospitals should take initiatives to improve the overall service quality of patient care. Regular feedback from patients should be taken and rules should be made considering the expectations and requirements of patients.*

**Keywords:** Patient satisfaction, Measure, Out-patient, Improve, Service quality.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Every country has its own idea of health care system according to the requirements of its population in a unique social and cultural milieu, but the main goal is indiscriminate delivery of effective and accessible health care services to the population.<sup>1</sup> Patient satisfaction is one of the paramount intent of any health system, but it is difficult to measure the satisfaction and gauge responsiveness of health systems as not only the clinical but also the nonclinical outcomes of care do influence the customer satisfaction.<sup>2</sup> Satisfaction can be defined as the extent of an individual's empiricism as opposed to his/her own presumption.<sup>3</sup> Generally, patients are the best source of information on both quality and quantity of health care services provided and patients' views are decisive factors in planning and evaluating satisfaction.<sup>4</sup>

According to Swamy (1975) patient's satisfaction is the real testimony to the efficiency of hospital administration. As the hospital serves all members of society, the expectation of users differs from each other because everyone carries a particular set of thoughts, feelings and needs.<sup>5</sup>

Estimation and betterment of the quality of health care system was, until recently, a low priority affair for the policy makers in developing countries. The reason drawn by the authors is the priority of extending coverage at the expense of quality and the perception that quality is difficult to assess and improving quality is equivalent to increasing inputs, thus costly and not affordable for many countries.<sup>6</sup> Today measurement of patient's satisfaction has become an administrative reality.<sup>7</sup> Any modern hospital has its spotlight on high quality patient care.<sup>8</sup> The goal of high-quality performance can only be achieved by scrutiny of healthcare facilities regarding patient satisfaction.<sup>4</sup> The idea of healthcare assessment is emphasized by Fitz Patrick Ray (1991) patient satisfaction provides potentially a direct indicator of system performance and is mean of choosing alternative strategies in healthcare provision. So, assessing satisfaction is not one-time action, instead it needs continuous monitoring and evaluation.<sup>9</sup>

Patients' perceptions about health care systems seems to have been largely ignored by health care managers in developing countries and ironically, clinicians are destitute of competency and proper training to address patient's expectations.<sup>10</sup> An efficient and effective system can only become a reality rather than just a theory if it operates on regular monitoring of its function according to the feedback of the customers using that system.<sup>11</sup> Compendium of patient's satisfaction can offer patients, an opportunity to participate in the betterment of their own care by reporting their experiences.<sup>12</sup> The approach of using knowledgeable and pleasant physicians and staff is insufficient now a days due to changes in lifestyles

.Timely delivery of the services with minimal waiting time has become one of the important predictors of patient's satisfaction.<sup>13</sup> Other essentials for accomplishment of patient's satisfaction are, easy approach, affordability and excellence of services, proficiency and empathy of service providers, proper guidance, provision of physical services, consideration on psychological and social aspects, permanence and visibility of effective care.<sup>3</sup> Physical evidence of provision of satisfactory services to the hospital can also be important for patient's satisfaction judgment. Overall cleanliness of facilities, availability of modern equipment and a general feeling that facilities are in good repair, can enhance patient satisfaction.<sup>14</sup>

Research context in Pakistan is mostly about tackling primary & basic level issues of health service delivery. While in advanced countries, the delicacies and sophistications of health care delivery are under discussion.<sup>15</sup> The reason to choose OPD for this study was that the OPD is shop window of the hospital that leads to glide in both new and old patients and holds back the long run sustainability of any hospital.<sup>5,8</sup>

OPD problems like overcrowding, delay in consultation, lack of proper guidance and many others lead to patient dissatisfaction.<sup>5</sup> If patients are not satisfied they may decide to seek for treatment somewhere else. On the other hand, satisfied patients are likely to exhibit approbatory behavioral volitions, which are salutary to the healthcare provider's long-term success.<sup>16</sup> The main impedance toward the amelioration of health care for the people of developing countries is dearth of access to even crucial health care services. Other reasons are extended waiting time and extortionate treatment and lab investigations.<sup>3</sup> Patients' satisfaction with the healthcare services is the milestone towards their compliance with the treatment and thus it endows the positive influence on their health.<sup>17</sup> This study was therefore undertaken with the objective to ascertain the level of patient satisfaction related to quality of health care available, within minimum period of time.

**Objectives**

1. To determine patients' level of satisfaction on the quality of health care delivered at the out-patient department (OPD) of public and private sector hospitals of Faisalabad.
2. To assess the effect of socio-economic status of patient on their level of satisfaction regarding services at OPD of these hospitals.
3. To give recommendations to improve the services provided at OPD of these hospitals.

**Literature Review**

According to a study in Thailand, patients attending OPD were satisfied with accessibility of general public to health care services. Most of the patients disapprove of the long waiting times for seeing

doctors and pharmacists, late commencement of doctor's working time.<sup>18</sup> Researchers from India concluded from their research that assessment of patient satisfaction is a simple and cost-effective method for evaluation of hospital services and the results can be used to improve the quality of care provided in that particular setup.<sup>19</sup> Another study carried out in tertiary care hospital of Nepal suggests that Level of satisfaction of patients was high with access to care, quality of care and physical facility but low with cost of healthcare, courtesy and concernment of healthcare providers.<sup>20</sup>

In a study executed in a private sector hospital in Islamabad it was found that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the OPD services offered. Different parameters like the behavior of staff, waiting time, nursing care, pharmacy services and logistic arrangements were put to question and the response was satisfactory regarding all.<sup>3</sup> A study reported low patient satisfaction at a teaching hospital in Ethiopia. Patients' dissatisfaction was attributed to long waiting time, poor interaction of health care workers with patients, low drug availability and decreased level of privacy of patients.<sup>4</sup> A study in rural Bangladesh underscores that the most powerful predictor for patient satisfaction with the government services was provider's behavior. A reduction in waiting time was more important to the patients than prolongation of the quite short consultation time. It also revealed that patient satisfaction is determined by the cultural background of the people. It showed that optimal care should be capable of meeting both medical and psychosocial needs of the patients.<sup>21</sup>

A review highlights the complex and interrelated determinants of patient satisfaction with health care system in Pakistan. Young age, female gender, literacy and high social class are few patient characteristics influencing level of patient satisfaction. Lack of privacy, autonomy, poor communication, and sanitation/hygiene leads to bad patient experience hence decreased satisfaction.<sup>22</sup> According to a study in Saudi Arabia, patients at the private outpatient clinic were more satisfied than those at the government outpatient clinic with the healthcare facilities in respect to quality of care, waiting time, physical environment, attitude of doctors and other staff.<sup>23</sup>

Another study in a tertiary care hospital in Lahore highlighted that majority of the patients were satisfied with the doctors. The hospital staff in the waiting area was found to be respectful and fair towards the patients. A vast majority agreed that hospital was clean and adequately ventilated.<sup>24</sup>

A comparative study conducted in public and private sector hospitals of Peshawar showed that patients were more satisfied with the health care facilities in

private sector hospitals. Both the groups were unsatisfied with the waiting time and time spent with doctor for consultation.<sup>25</sup> Statistical data from a study in India pointed out that majority of the patients were satisfied with the facilities & services available at health center. Statistically significant relation was seen between patients' gender and satisfaction level with doctor's behavior.<sup>26</sup> Patients respond an overall level of dissatisfaction on quality of health care provided at OPD of a hospital in Tanzania. They were of the view that the OPD staff was lacking communication skills. Unavailability of essential drugs and poor clinician's prescription skills were other factors contributing towards patient dissatisfaction.<sup>16</sup>

According to a study in Cambodia education was found to have significant relationship with patient satisfaction level. High satisfaction level was observed among illiterate and satisfaction level gradually falls as the literacy level increases.<sup>27</sup> The study undertaken in outpatient clinic in Nigeria revealed that overall patient satisfaction with services at the clinic was above average, patients expressed dissatisfaction with registration time, wait time and condition of consulting room. They recommend that health care managers should commence appointment system to reduce the number of patients who turn out at the same time.<sup>28</sup> It is stated in a study held in government health facility in India that the satisfaction level of patients with the physician and nursing care domains were high but management needs to improve on the comfort and cleanliness of the hospital.<sup>29</sup> The results of a study undertaken in a private hospital in Karachi revealed that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the existing services provided by the outpatient department. It also reported that there are certain areas which need to be improved like waiting time, the procedure for obtaining or recovering medical records, and shortage of medicines in the pharmacy and cleanliness of washrooms.<sup>30</sup>

## MATERIALS AND METHODS:

### 1. Study Design:

Cross-sectional study

### 2. Study Population:

The study population consisted of patients attending Out-Patient Department of Allied Hospital, Faisalabad and Aziz Fatima Memorial Hospital, Faisalabad.

### 3. Duration of Study:

From May 2017 to August 2017

### 4. Place of Study:

Allied Hospital, Faisalabad and Aziz Fatima Memorial Hospital, Faisalabad.

### 5. Sample Unit:

Sample unit was each patient from Out-Patient Department of Allied Hospital, Faisalabad and Aziz Fatima Memorial Hospital, Faisalabad.

**6. Sampling Technique:**

Non-Probability Sampling (Convenient Sampling)

**7. Sample Size:**

Total sample size was 100 patients which include 50 (25 male and 25 females) patients from Out-Patient Department of Allied Hospital, Faisalabad and 50 (25 male and 25 females) patients from Out-Patient Department of Aziz Fatima Memorial Hospital, Faisalabad.

**8. Operational Definition:**

Satisfaction can be defined as the extent of an individual's empiricism as opposed to his/her own presumption. Patients' satisfaction with the healthcare services is the milestone towards their compliance with the treatment.

**9. Data Collection:**

The questionnaire was created and then typed on computer and printed as hard copy. Data was collected by interviewing patients, in May and July of 2017. The study subjects were informed that the information collected would be anonymous; and participation would be totally

voluntary. Males and females were provided the same questionnaire. Patients' status as male and female, age, occupation, residence, and family income were noted. Questions were asked in language understood by the patients (Urdu or Punjabi).

**10. Data Analysis:**

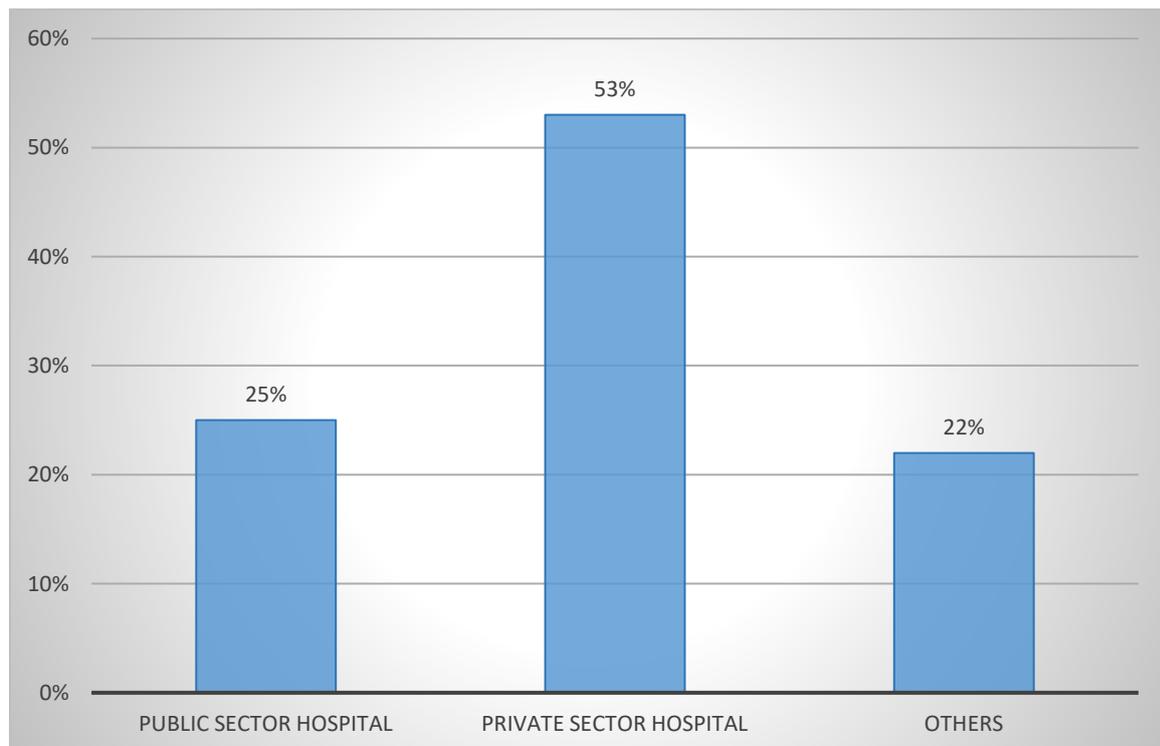
The filled questionnaires were checked for completeness of data. The data obtained from the completed questionnaires were analyzed. Percentages were calculated and presented in the form of charts. Descriptive statistics were applied.

**11. Ethical Issues:**

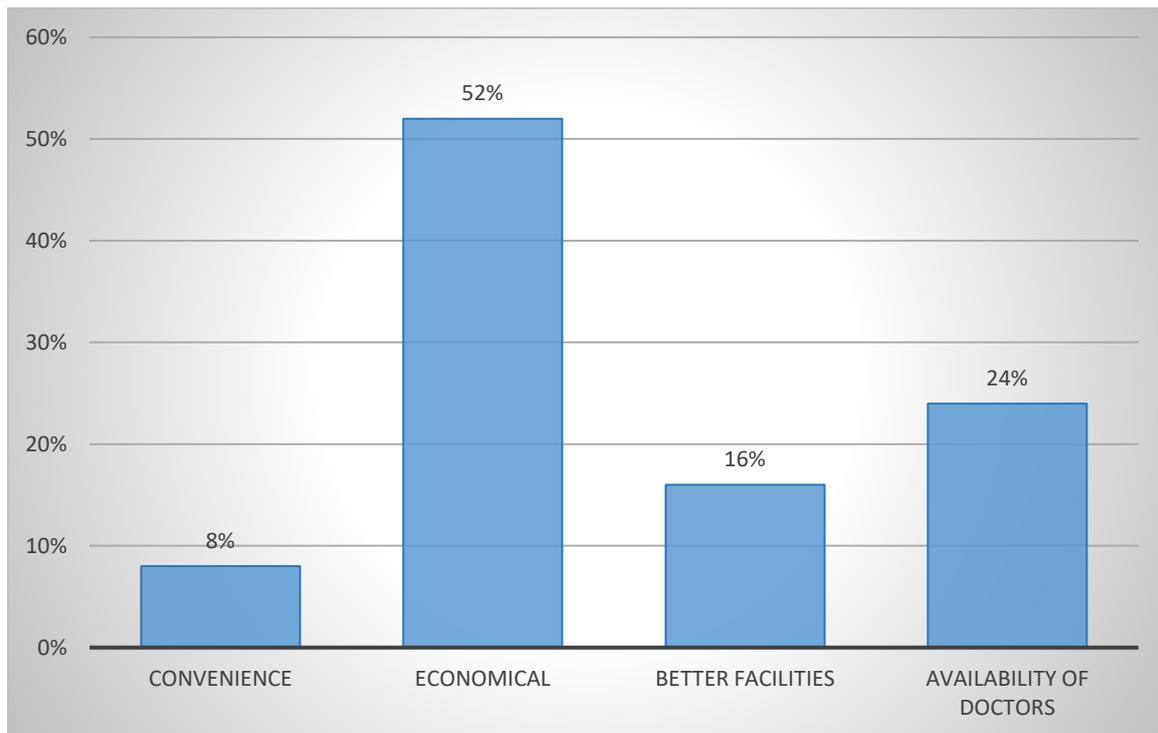
To obtain the consent of patients prior to data collection, an explanation on the aim and objectives of the study was given; and confidentiality was ensured. Prior permission was obtained after approval of questionnaire from the community medicine department of the institution for conducting the study. The purpose of the study was explained to the participating patients and confidentiality was ensured. Informed consent was obtained from every patient before interviewing.

**RESULTS:**

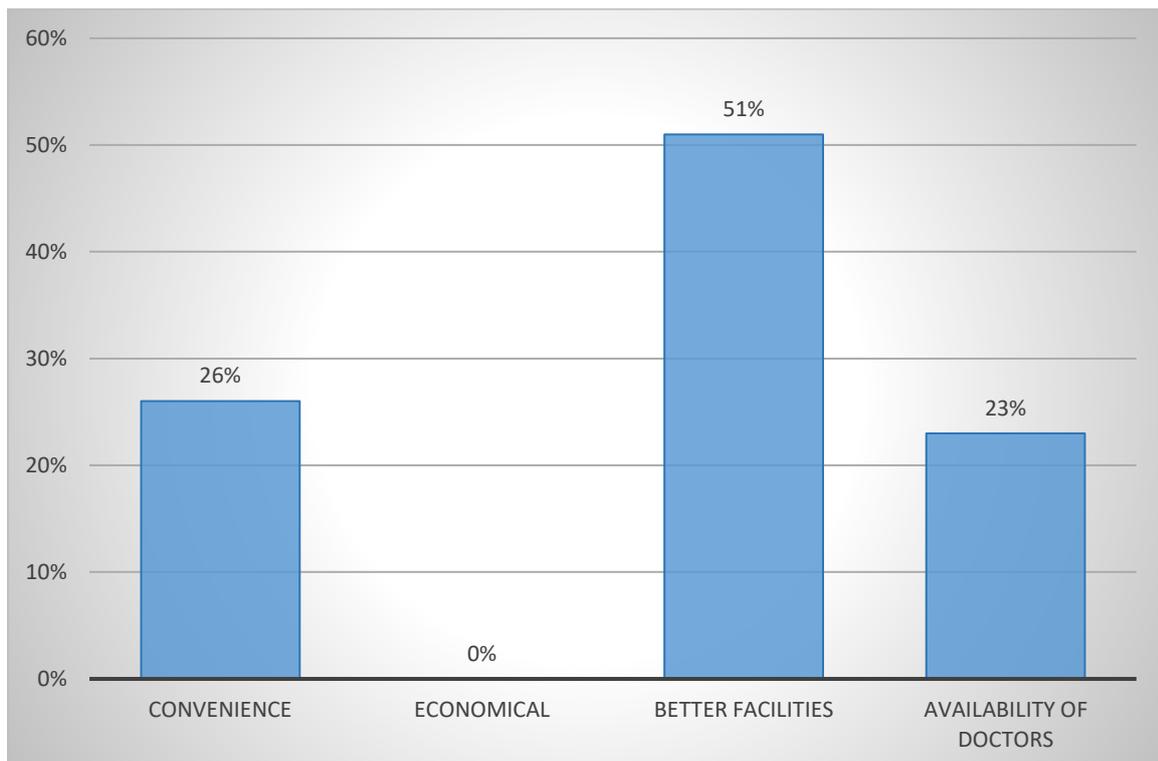
**Chart # 1: Your preference when you get sick**

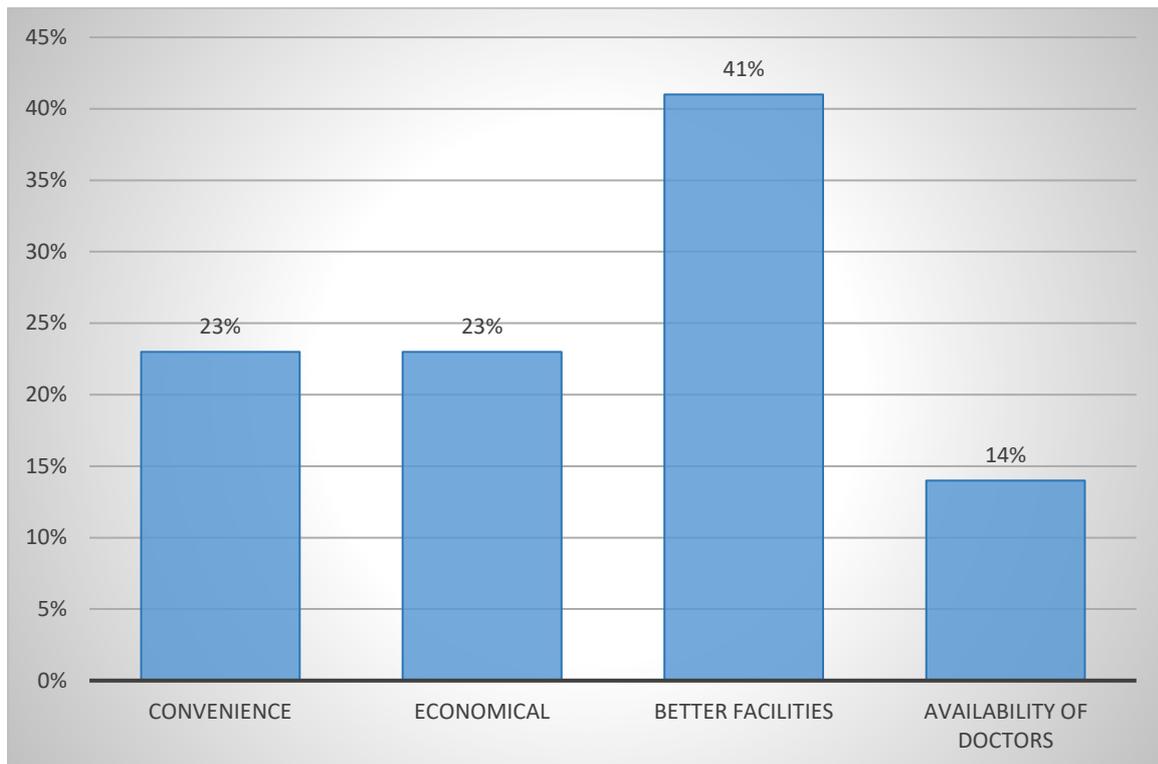
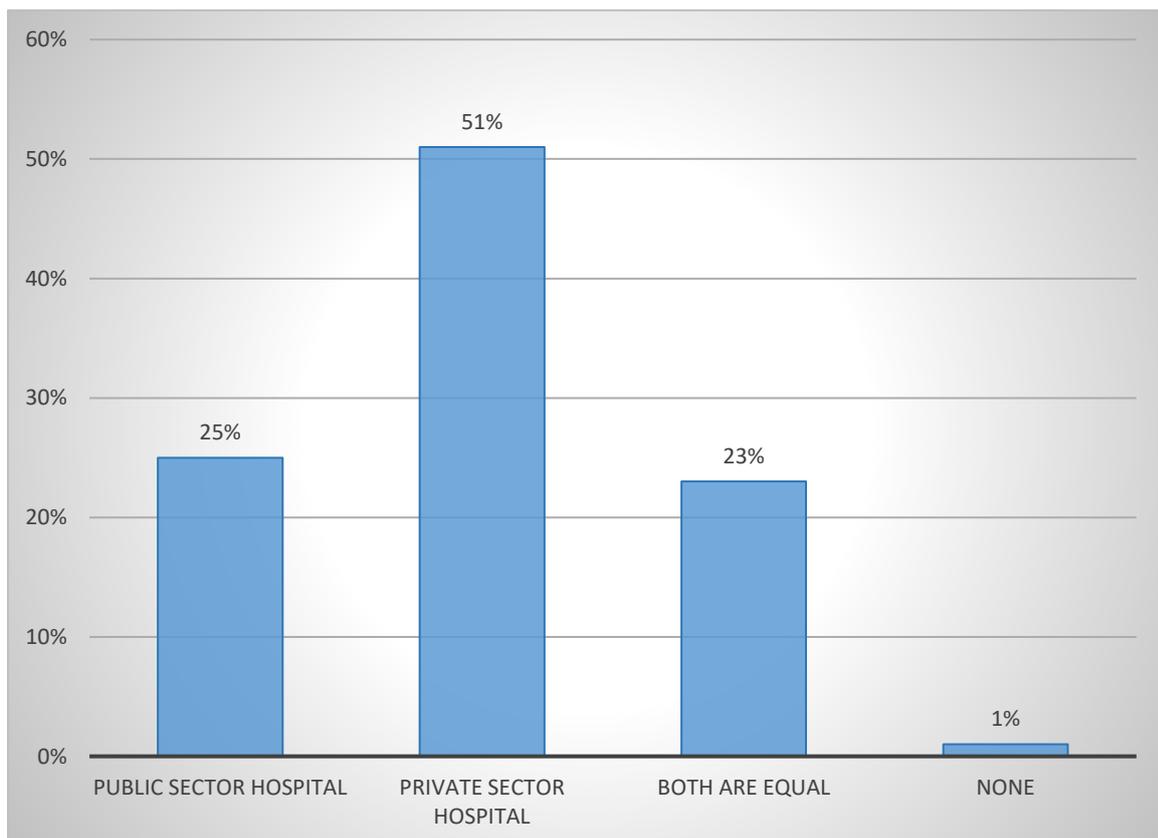


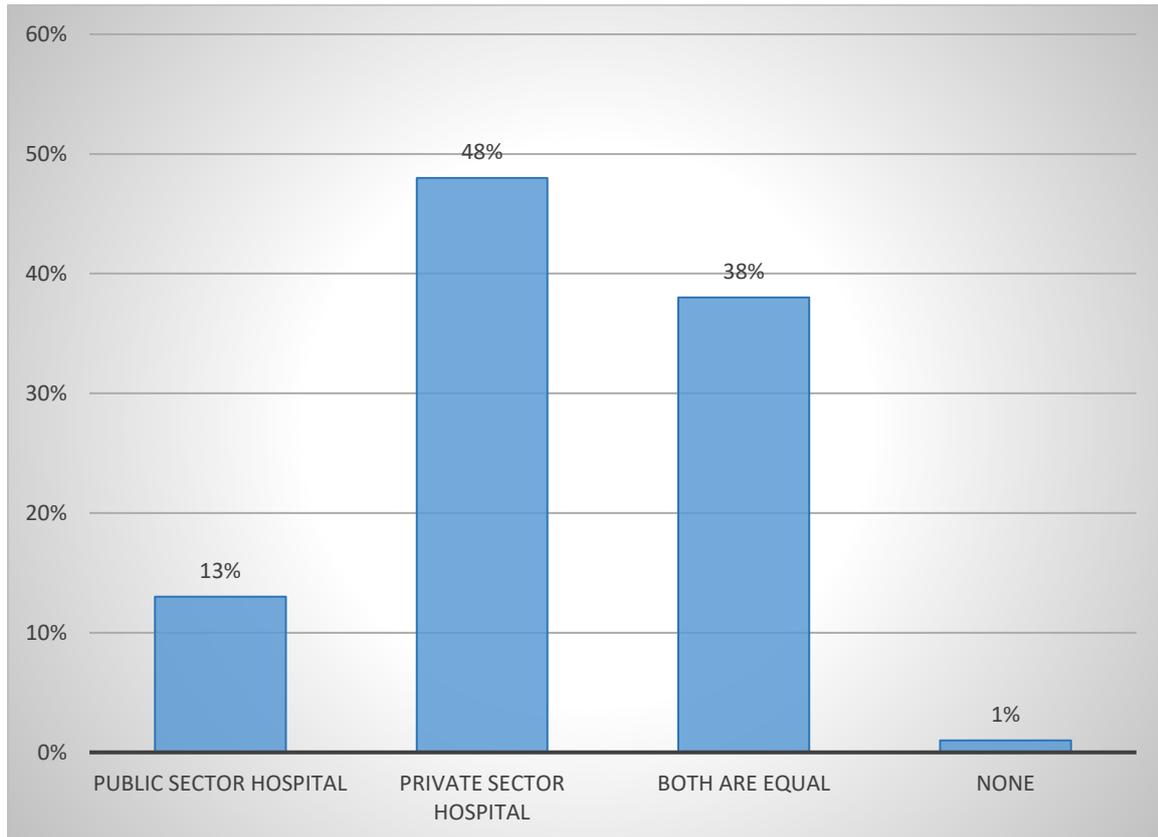
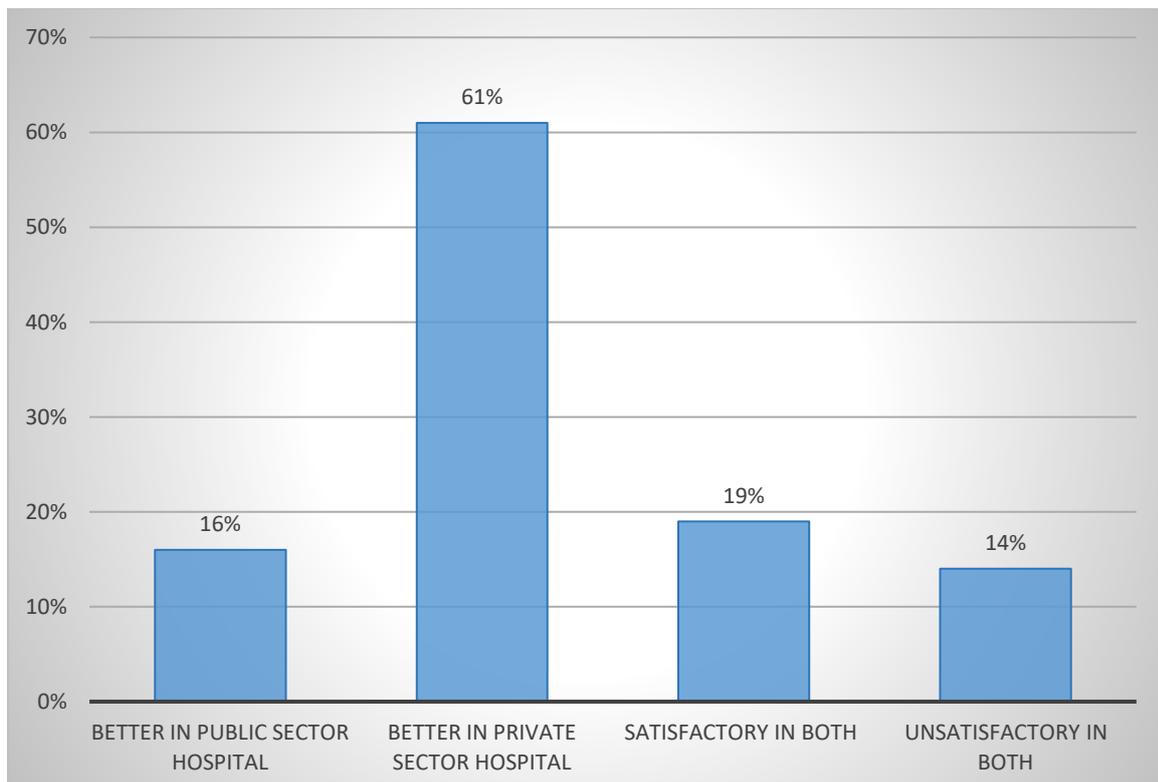
**Chart # 2 (a): Reason for Preference  
(Public Sector Hospital 25%)**

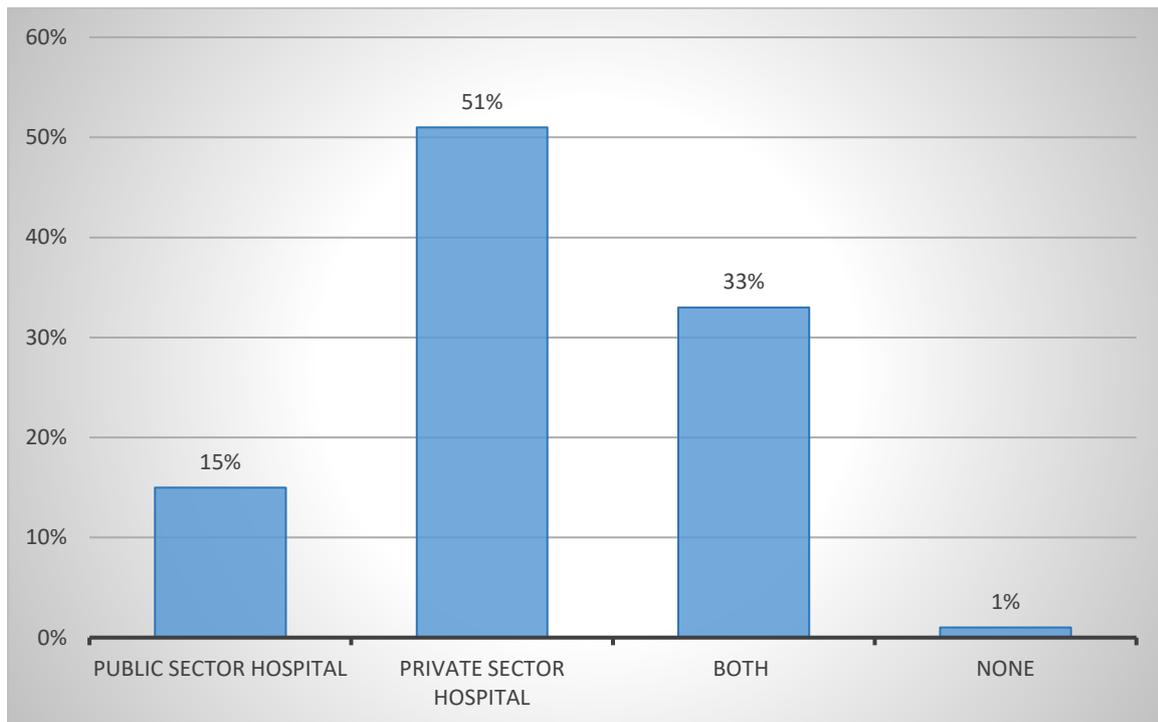
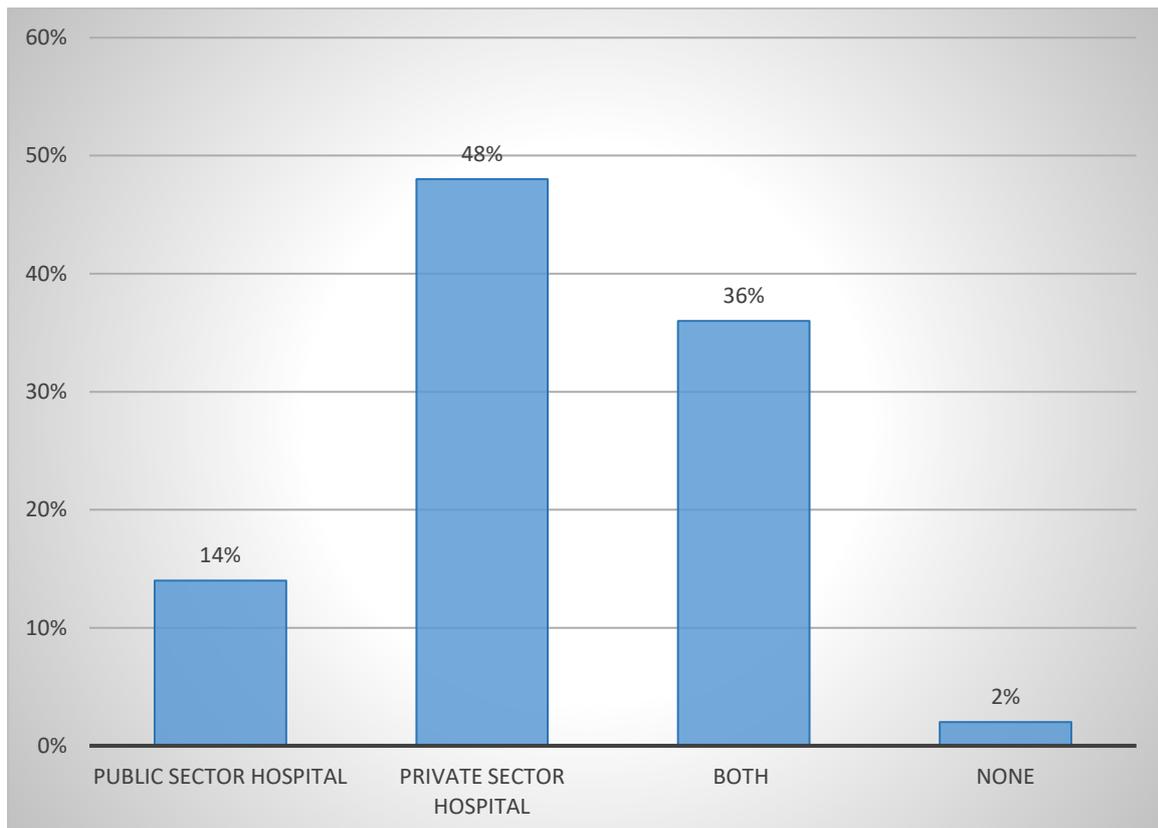


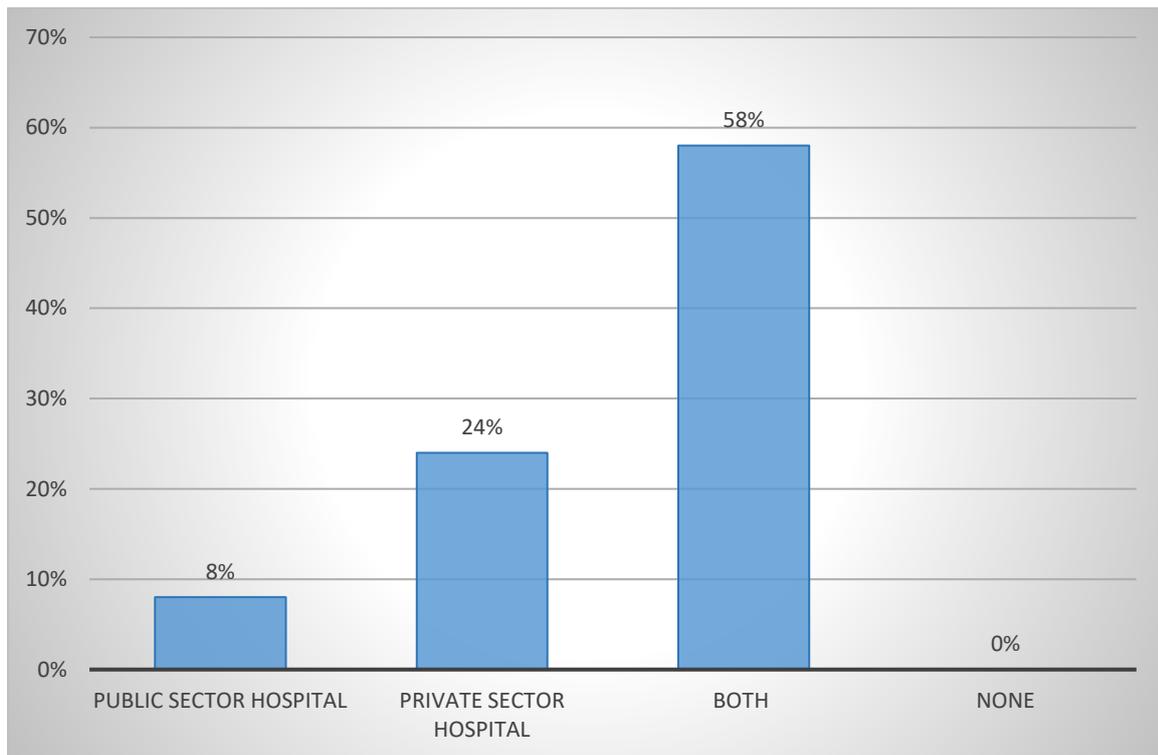
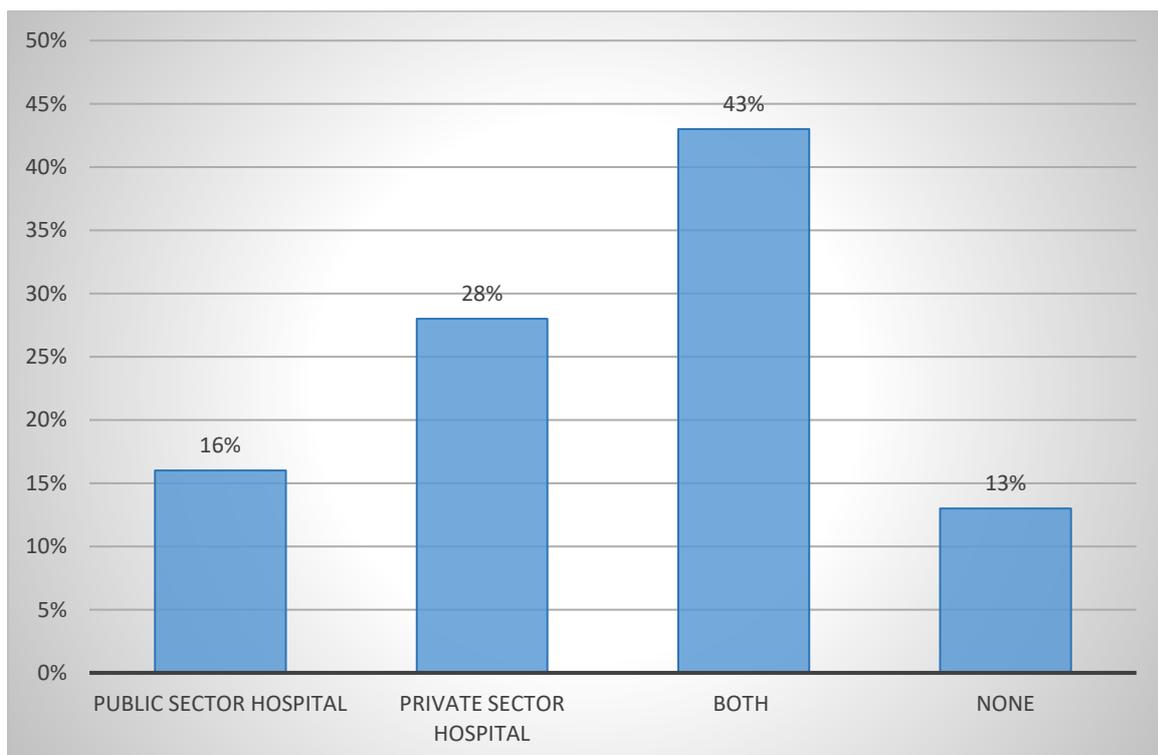
**Chart # 2 (b): Reason for Preference  
(Private Sector Hospital 53%)**

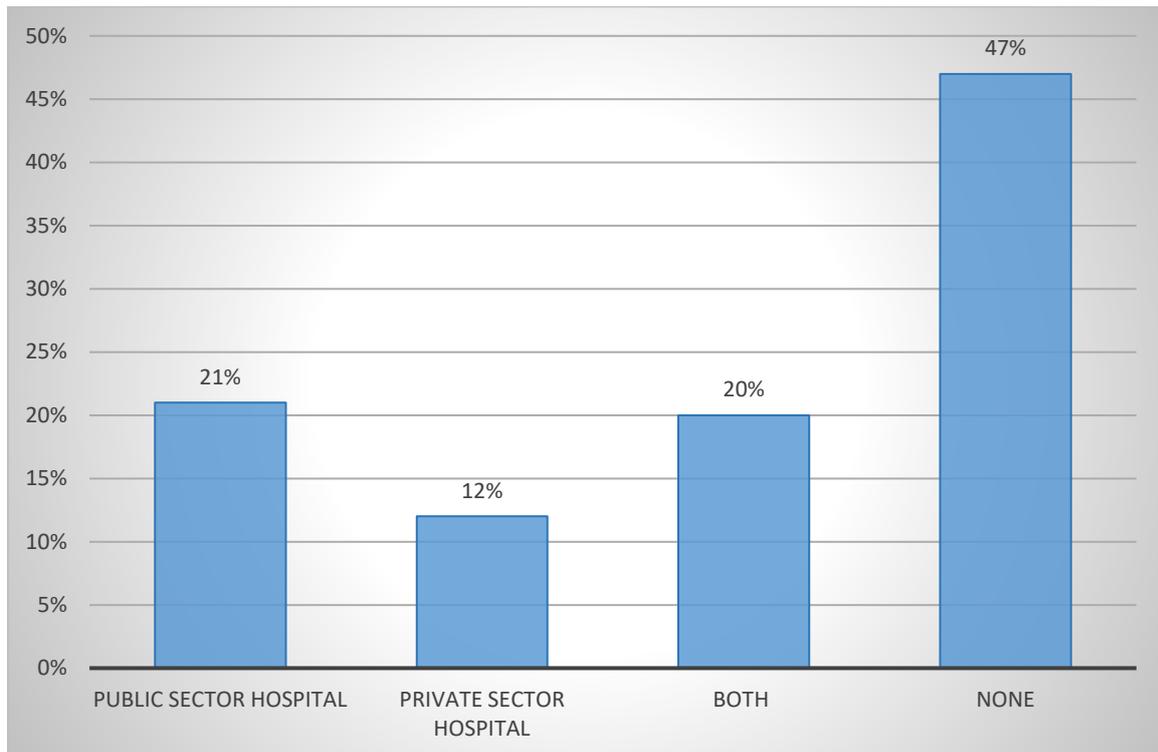
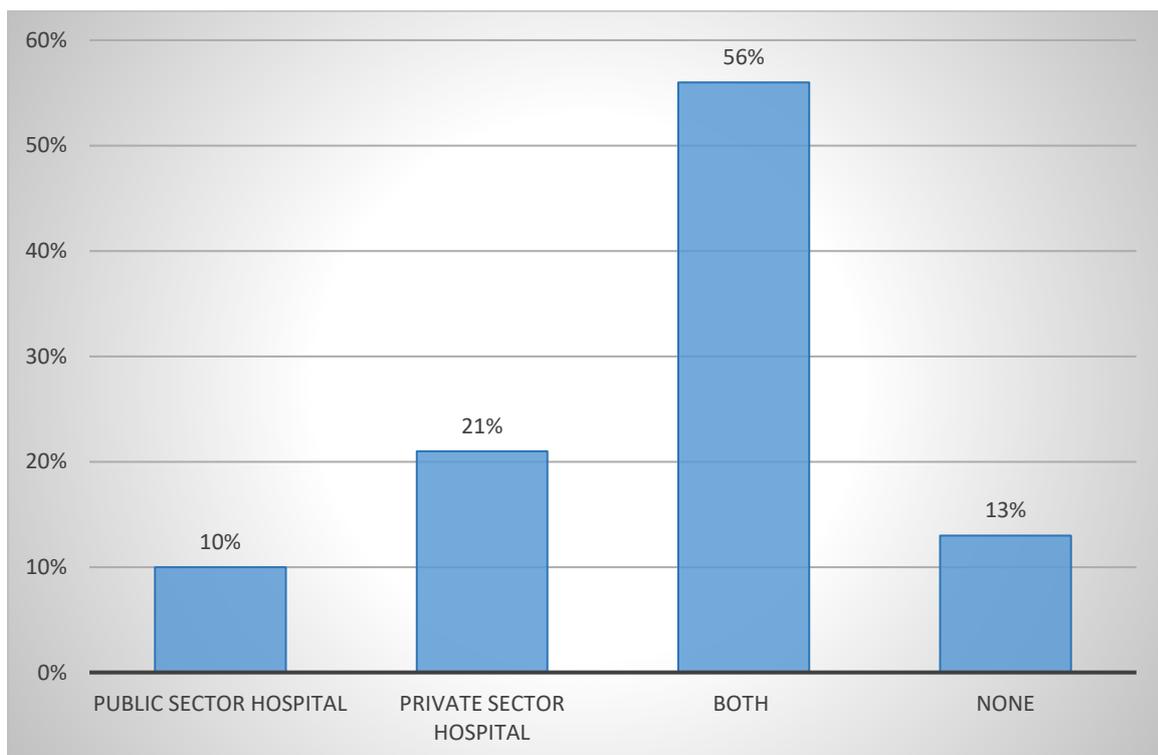


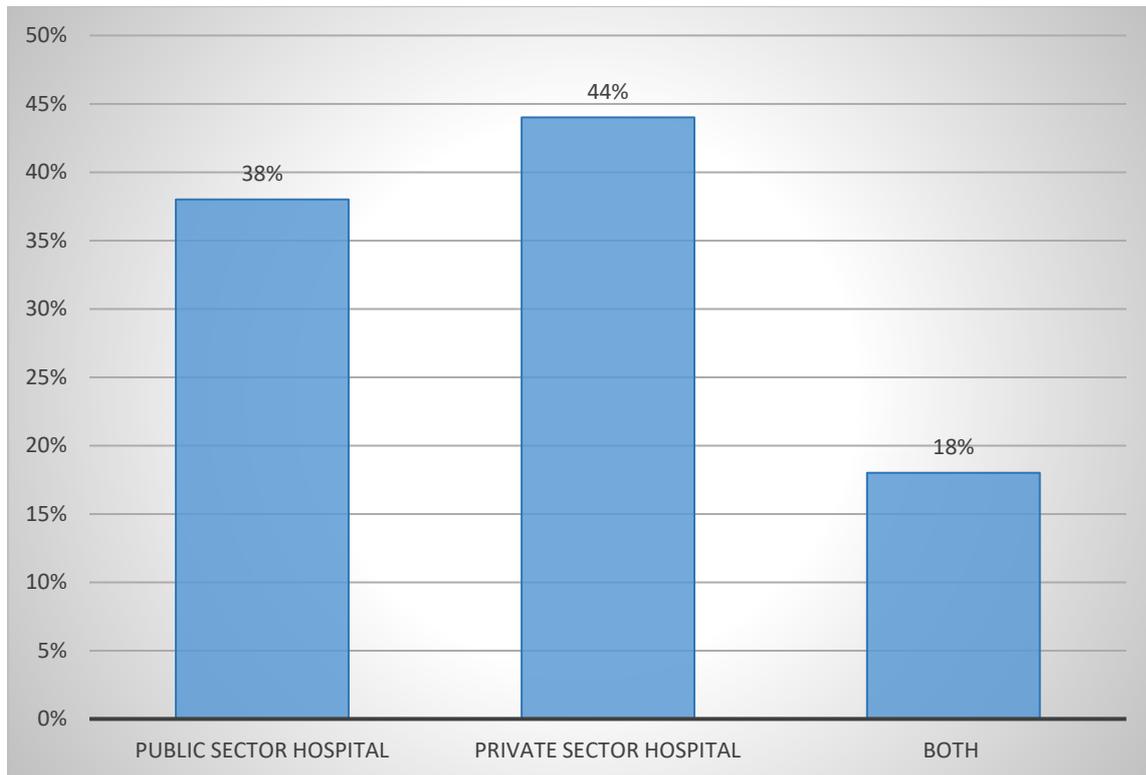
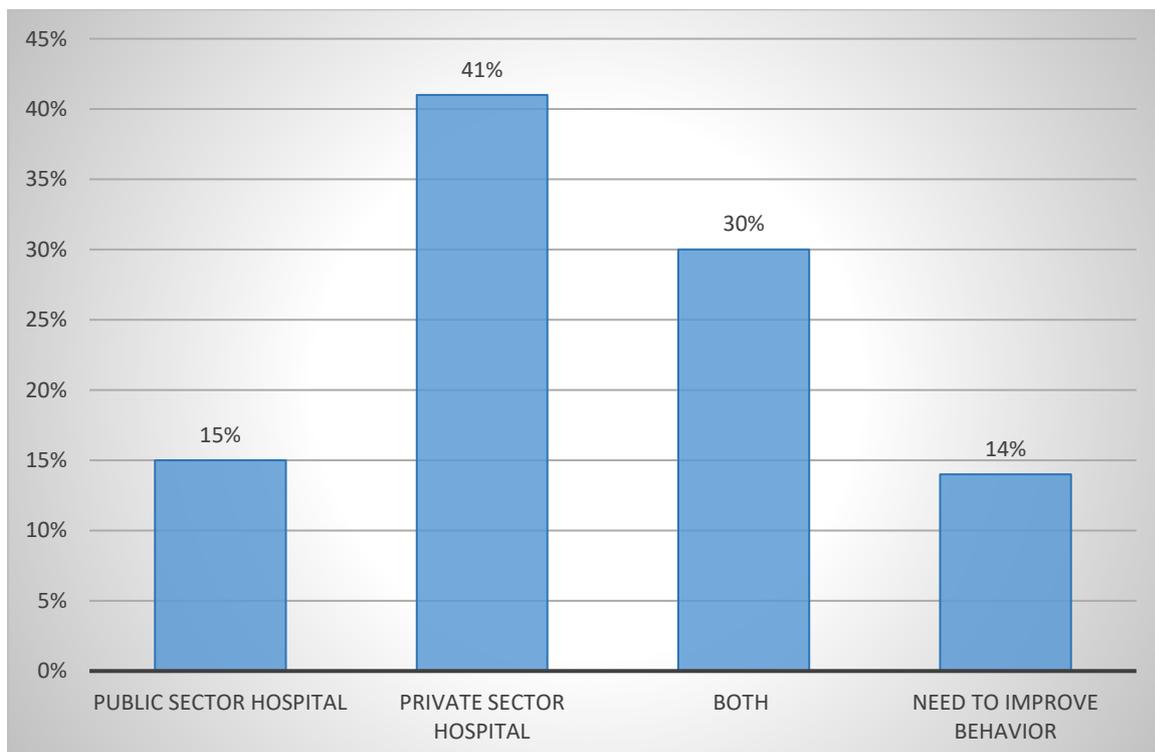
**Chart # 2 (c): Reason for Preference  
(Others 53%)****Chart # 3: More visually appealing building, seating and waiting area**

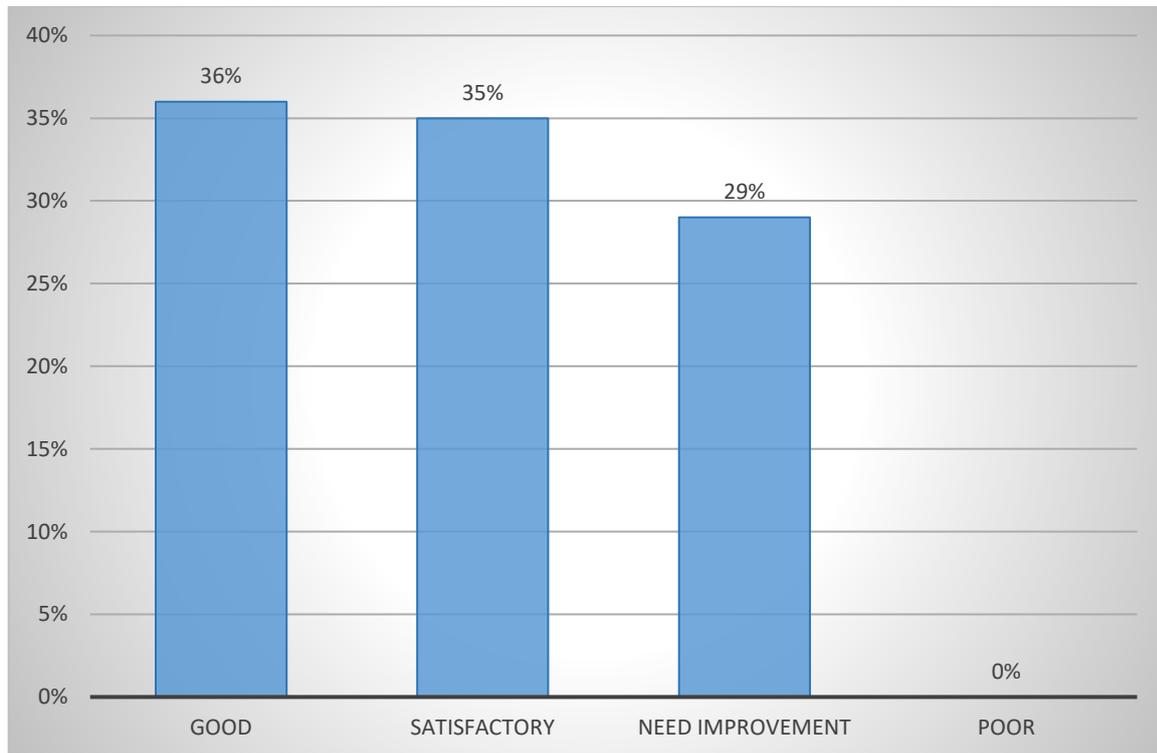
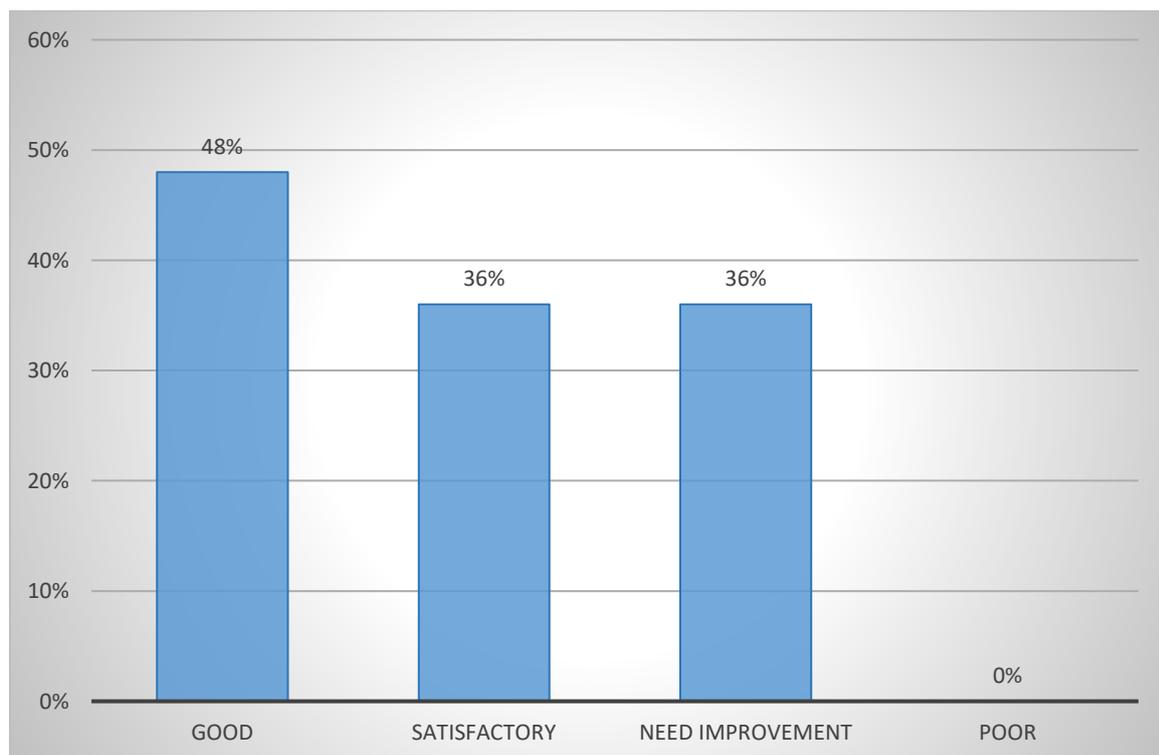
**Chart # 4: Maintenance of environmental hygiene/cleanliness****Chart # 5: Speed and ease of appointments**

**Chart # 6: Doctors are more welcoming and concerning****Chart # 7: Get adequate time and attention for consultation**

**Chart # 8: Privacy is respected****Chart # 9: Given adequate information about your health condition**

**Chart # 10: Asked about affordability before prescribing medicine****Chart # 11: Given proper/adequate directions for medicine use**

**Chart # 12: Lab equipment are available and economical****Chart # 13: Staff is well mannered and respond immediately**

**Chart # 14: Overall services provided by public sector hospital****Chart # 15: Overall services provided by private sector hospital**

**DISCUSSION:**

Health care is a serious concern and a point to ponder about for practitioners, researchers and government officials. A variety of steps have been taken by the government of Pakistan to improve the quality of patient care. Provision of good quality health care services is the basic right of people. Health care in Pakistan is divided into two categories; governmental and private. Private sector hospitals are in the business of health care. People belong to high income level always prefer private outpatient hospitals/clinics as they can afford expenses of medical facilities available there, while people who belong to lower income group prefer the governmental outpatient hospitals/clinic as the treatment is given free of charges.

In the governmental sector, provincial governments are given authorities to make rules and regulations. While in private sectors, there is no control of government. It is very necessary to improve the service quality of both governmental and private sectors.<sup>31</sup> This study was undertaken to assess the level of satisfaction of the patients regarding various aspects of health care services in government and private health facilities in Faisalabad.

In our study we evaluated the level of satisfaction among patients who were attending OPD in Allied hospital and Aziz Fatima hospital and the majorities of those participants were residents of towns in the vicinity of Faisalabad and belonged to lower middle class. The socio-economic status and cultural background influence the satisfaction level of patients as the expectations vary in different socio-economic groups so does the satisfaction.<sup>21,22</sup>

Private sector hospitals seemed to be more concerned about the maintenance of their architectural and sanitation facilities, and more attention is being paid towards the comfort of people in waiting areas. Despite being spacious and conveniently located, public sector hospitals lack in provision of comfort to the patients because they are not properly and timely maintained. In accordance with another study management of government hospitals needs to improve the comfort and cleanliness of the hospital.<sup>29</sup>

Long waiting time and favoritism in appointments affects the satisfaction of patients. Long waiting time coupled with uncomfortable waiting areas renders patients unsatisfied in public sector hospitals as opposed to shorter waiting time in private sector hospitals. Low levels of patient satisfaction in

government hospitals is attributed to these factors.<sup>4,21,25,28-30</sup>

In general, patients were satisfied with the demeanor and competency of doctors in both settings but there were discrepancies in views regarding behavior and compliance of paramedical staff. It is opposed to a study in which patients were dissatisfied with the behavior or staff and skills of the clinician.<sup>16</sup>

The overwhelming majority of patients reported that they were adequately informed about their health conditions, given proper directions for medication use and their privacy was respected in both sectors. Some patients disapprove of the directions given for medication use in public sector hospital. This factor affects the compliance of patient with the treatment regimen and it has been observed by researchers that satisfied patients are more compliant.<sup>16</sup>

Diagnostic facilities are easily available and economically favorable in public sector hospitals but expensive in private sectors. The availability of good health care facilities at sky high expenses is the major dilemma of our health care system.

According to this study, overall services provided are good 48% and 36% in private and public sector hospitals respectively. This result is consistent with the results of study that compared patient satisfaction in government and private outpatient clinics in Saudi Arabia.<sup>23</sup>

**Limitations:**

The limitation of our study was that it was carried out in Faisalabad only and we may not be able to generalize its conclusions to the whole country. Furthermore, convenience sampling was employed. The time frame was short, there was lack of manpower and the resources were constraint. Moreover, we were unable to define a cut off score above which a patient is labelled as satisfied.

**CONCLUSION:**

According to the results of present study, we reach to some conclusions. Public sector and private sector hospitals are a source of satisfaction for patients in some aspects but in other ones they are not that much satisfied. Majority of population in Pakistan is earning a very low income. Because of poor economic conditions and inflation, people are not able to afford private hospitals. They go mostly for public ones and as they don't have to spend much money there so they are mostly satisfied. On the contrary, patients in private sector hospitals have to

pay for their treatment hence they demand better quality of service. Summarizing all, patients need better and improved health services and for this purpose, important steps should be taken by management of hospitals. Even if patients are not paying for better services, as a human it is the right of every individual to get better health facilities.

### Recommendations

Based on the results of the present study, some recommendations are proposed for public and private sector hospitals to increase quality of their services and to satisfy patients.

- Patients' opinions should be given importance.
- Reinforcement of the regulation on working hours and recruitment of more doctors are recommended for improving the long waiting time.
- Act of treating referral patients' promptly should be avoided.
- More staff should be hired to maintain the cleanliness

- Performance of staff should be monitored regularly.
- Two ways communication with politeness and friendliness during the provision of service to patients and the establishment of good communicator model are also recommended in order to increase patient satisfaction level.
- Considering health service providers as internal customers, patient satisfaction study should be conducted in parallel with the satisfaction of service providers with their job in order to better understand the concerns of the service providers that make patients dissatisfied so that these concerns can be solved accordingly.
- Government should frame legislation on patient care in both public and private sector hospital and develop mechanism to ensure compliance.
- Government should also take steps to make regulatory authority more independent and vibrant to ensure compliance of fair practices, transparent allocation and use of health care budget and provision of best medical care facilities in both private and public sector hospitals

### Annexure I

#### Questionnaire

PUNJAB MEDICAL COLLEGE

4TH YEAR MBBS

COMMUNITY MEDICINE RESEARCH PROJECT

This research is conducted to assess the satisfaction of patients attending OPD of Public and Private sector tertiary care hospitals of Faisalabad.

- Age:
- Sex:
- Residence: city /town /village
- Occupation:
- Monthly income: (a) <10000 (b) 10-30000 (c) 30-50000 (d) >50000

1. What do you prefer when you get sick?

- a) go to a government hospital                      b) go to a private hospital                      c) others

2. Why do you prefer public/ private sector hospital?

- a) convenience                      b) economical                      c) better facilities                      d) availability of doctors

3. Which one is more visually appealing (building, seating/ waiting area etc) to you with good directional signs?

- a) public sector hospital    b) private sector hospital    c) both are equal                      d) none

4. Environmental hygiene/ cleanliness is properly maintained in

- a) public sector hospital    b) private sector hospital    c) satisfactory in both                      d) unsatisfactory in both

5. Speed and ease of appointments/ admission procedures are

- a) better in public sector hospital                      b) better in private sector hospital  
c) satisfactory in both                      d) unsatisfactory in both

6. Doctors are more welcoming and concerned in

- a) public sector hospital                      b) private sector hospital    c) both                      d) none

7. Where do you get adequate time and proper attention for consultation?  
 a) public sector hospital    b) private sector hospital    c) in both    d) none
8. Your privacy is respected during examination in  
 a) public sector hospital    b) private sector hospital    c) both    d) none
9. You are given adequate information about your health condition in  
 a) public sector hospital    b) private sector hospital    c) given in both    d) not given in both
10. Doctor asks about your affordability before prescribing medication  
 a) in public sector hospital    b) in private sector hospital    c) in both    d) none
11. You are given proper and adequate directions for medication use  
 a) in public sector hospital    b) in private sector hospital    c) in both    d) not given properly in both
12. Lab equipment for diagnostic procedures are available and economical in  
 a) public sector hospital    b) private sector hospital    c) both
13. Staff is consistently well mannered and respond to needs immediately  
 a) in public sector hospital    b) in private sector hospital    c) in both    d) need to improve behavior in both
14. Overall services provided by public sector hospital is  
 a) good    b) satisfactory    c) need improvement    d) poor
15. Overall services provided by private sector hospital is  
 a) good    b) satisfactory    c) need improvement    d) poor

## Annexure II

### Informed Consent Pro forma

[Informed Consent Form for Community Medicine Research]

Name of Project: SATISFACTION OF PATIENTS ATTENDING OPD OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR TERTIARY CARE HOSPITALS OF FAISALABAD.

#### Statement by participant of the research:

I have been provided all the information regarding this research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Signature of Participant:

#### Statement by the researcher/person taking consent:

I have accurately provided the information to the participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands.

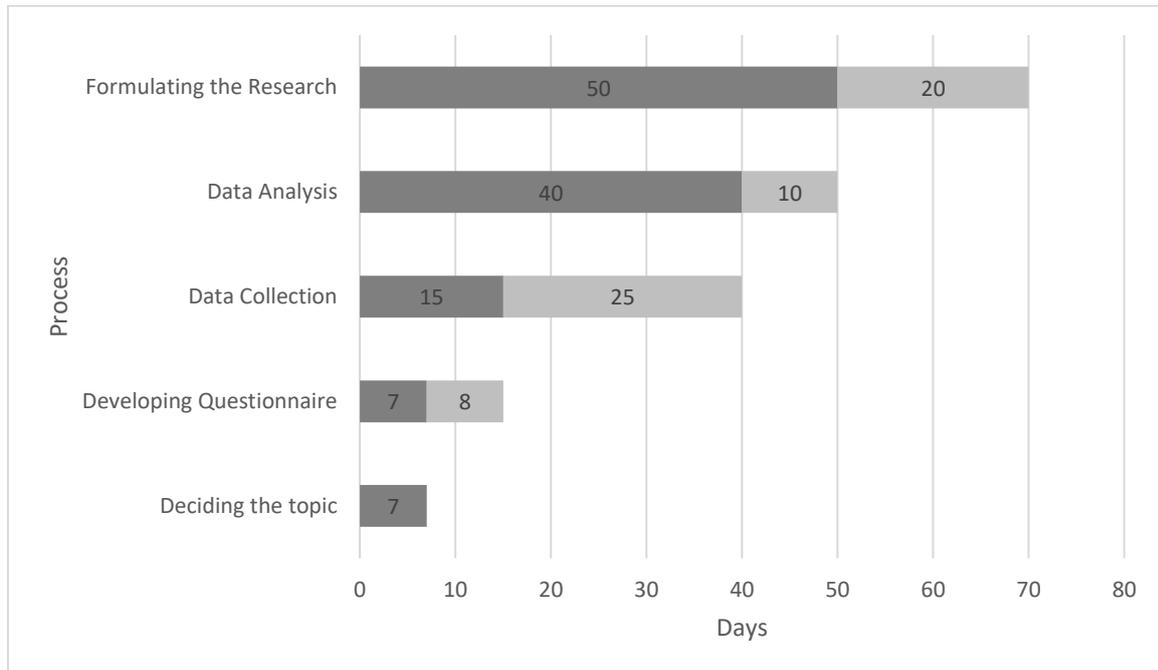
I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Name of Researcher/person taking the consent \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Day/month/year

**Annexure III****Gantt's Chart**

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